

**The Education of Blind Deaf-Mutes,
with the Case of Helen Keller**

Charles Ray

HV1663
.R 904



**M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY
AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

6/8/04

HV1663 c1

R

copy 1

know you will forgive me and look leniently upon my shortcomings. Promise me you will,' she implored in deep earnestness, taking my hand in hers.

I promised; then she rushed into another room for a moment, and reappeared in hat and jacket.

We drove quickly to that short, dismal street in Bloomsbury, and on approaching the house I saw that the dingy Venetian-blinds were all down save at that window where showed the mysterious sign.

Having dismissed the cab, we both ascended the dirty, neglected steps, and rang. The bell clanged loudly somewhere in the regions below; but no one stirred. I was in favour of calling an inspector from the nearest police-station and telling him of our suspicions, but she would not hear of it.

'No!' she cried, terrified at my suggestion. 'The police must know nothing—nothing at all. If they did, then I myself must suffer.'

Her words were, to say the least, very curious.

'No,' she went on; 'we must try and get in ourselves—force the door, or something.'

To force a door of that strong, old-fashioned character would be difficult, I saw. The latch, too, was a patent one, with a well-known maker's name on the keyhole-cover—nearly new. To force a front door in a public street in the broad light of day without

attracting attention is well-nigh impossible; therefore, instructing her to wait patiently where she was, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the neighbours, I waited my opportunity, and then got over the locked gate and went down the steps to the kitchen door in the basement. That too was securely fastened; but after I had made an examination of the window it struck me that the shutters were only closed-to and not bolted; therefore I determined to go back to Theobald's Road and purchase a chisel, a glazier's diamond, and a putty-knife, and return with them as soon as possible. I acted on this at once, and until my return a quarter of an hour later, Lady Judith walked past the house and remained at the other end of the street.

The door resisted all efforts; therefore I presently turned my attention to the window, and at last succeeded in unlatching it with the putty-knife, working back the bolt of the shutters, and crawling inside the dirty, disused kitchen.

At that moment Lady Judith had ascended the steps to the front door; and groping my way in the semi-darkness up the stairs, I gained the wide, old-fashioned hall, and after some difficulty with the complicated lock, opened the door to her.

Then, together, we went inside to ascertain what mystery that closed and gloomy place contained.

THE EDUCATION OF BLIND DEAF-MUTES, WITH THE CASE OF HELEN KELLER.

By CHARLES RAY.



WRITING in 1809, Dr Watson, an eminent British authority on the education of the blind, said: 'Whether any instance has ever occurred of a case so melancholy as that of one of our species being born deaf and blind I am unable to say. I would gladly hope that the case has been of rare occurrence. May it ever continue so; for should it unhappily occur, what could be done for the subject of it but supply corporal sustenance? I am aware that the Abbé de l'Épée, always ingenious and humane, had offered to undertake the instruction of such children of deprivation, upon the supposition that the touch might be employed as a medium of mental communication. But I must acknowledge I can form no notion of the practicability of this to any extent that might be termed *rational* without admitting the exploded hypothesis of *innate* ideas. Every friend of humanity will rejoice that, though we are informed the good Abbé made his offer known through the public journals of the time, it does not appear that he ever had an opportunity of reducing his theory to practice.' That was penned less than a century ago; but what would the doctor have said could he have foreseen the giant strides that would be made within a comparatively short

time in the education of persons suffering from this double affliction? Much has been written as to whether the blind or the deaf may be considered the least unfortunate, and the question is usually decided in favour of the blind; but the case of Miss Helen Keller has proved that even when both deprivations meet in the same individual there need be no limit to the mental development of the afflicted. This young American lady was born at Tuscumbia, Alabama, on 27th June 1880, and for a brief period possessed all the faculties of the average child. But at the age of nineteen months she suffered a serious illness, with the result that both sight and hearing departed for ever. Her case, indeed, seemed hopeless; and it is not surprising that a child possessing the mental vigour which after-events have proved that Helen Keller had, should have fretted and fought for release from her prison-house, and have found vent for her feelings in violent fits of passion. 'Once,' she says, 'I knew the depth where no hope was, and darkness lay on the face of all things. Then love came, and set my soul free. Once I knew only darkness and stillness. Now I know hope and joy. Once I fretted and beat myself against the wall that shut me in. Now I rejoice in the consciousness that I can act, and attain heaven. My life was without past or

37256-Mt67

'You see, I couldn't well distinguish the face of the man who fired at me,' he said, in response to my inquiry; 'but I heard the woman address him as Selby.'

The woman! Could it have been Judith who had accompanied them, or was it Anita Bardi?

Barrett presently left to report the incident by telegraph to his inspector at Spalding, and the rector took counsel with us. A bold attempt to search had evidently been made, and had only been abandoned by the ill-advised action of one of the party. Although the constable had been the victim of a dastardly outrage, it had certainly been fortunate that we had marked out the spot and set watch upon it. Our enemies had made wrong calculations at Threave by not having noted the second clause of the instructions; but here, with the aid of the plan, they had certainly hit upon the exact spot designated by the monk Godfrey.

Mr Mason had gone out to obtain assistance in our work of excavation, which we decided should commence at once, when a telegram was brought to me which showed that it had been handed in at King's Cross Station, and read as follows:

'Come to Grosvenor Street. Most important. Must see you immediately. If I am not at home go to Harpur Street; but if you desire to fulfil your promise to help me, do not lose an instant.—JUDITH.'

My first impulse was to read the telegram aloud; but my companions being in ignorance of my intimate friendship with her, I resolved to keep my own counsel.

'I have to return to London at once,' I announced, crushing the message in my hand. 'You fellows will continue the search, and I will return to-night if possible.'

'Private business?' queried Sammy, who had lit his morning cigarette airily, and stood with his hands deep in his trousers-pockets.

I responded in the affirmative, and, turning, told the maid to order a trap at once to take me to Peterborough Station.

Thus I was compelled to absent myself from the work of excavating in that low-lying fen-field a mile beyond the abbey; and at half-past twelve o'clock I alighted from a hansom in Grosvenor Street, and running up the broad flight of steps to the big portico, rang the bell.

'Yes, sir, her ladyship is expecting you,' was the footman's response to my inquiry; and without further ceremony he conducted me through the fine hall, filled with magnificent trophies of the chase, and up the wide staircase to a small room on the first floor, wherein, white and haggard, Judith rose quickly to greet me.

'Oh, Mr Kennedy!' she gasped when the man had closed the door. 'I'm so glad to see you safe and well!'

'Why Mr Kennedy?' I asked half-reproachfully.

'Well, Allan, then,' she said, smiling. 'But we have no time to lose,' she went on. 'I fear that

something terrible has occurred; but exactly what, I don't know.'

'How do you mean? Explain,' I urged excitedly.

'You probably know what occurred down at Crowland last night?' she said. 'They obtained the parchment plan, and at once determined to search for the treasure known to be hidden there; but a policeman discovered them, and they shot him.'

'I know,' I responded. 'And what occurred afterwards?' That was the first time she had mentioned the search for treasure.

'They returned to London—all three of them.'

'And the woman?'

'What woman?' she inquired, looking me straight in the face.

'The woman who was with them,' I said meaningly, recollecting that her own telegram had been sent from King's Cross Station.

'I know nothing of her,' was the response. 'I'm speaking of my father, Selby, and the hunchback. They returned to London at seven this morning—to Harpur Street.'

'Well?'

'I went there at nine o'clock, but found the house still closed, and could make nobody hear, although I know they entered there about eight o'clock. The blind is now up, and the bear cub is in the window,' she added hoarsely. 'There is death in that house!'

'Death! Is that the meaning of the strange sign?' I gasped. 'Do you really suspect that some tragedy has been enacted?'

'Yes,' she cried hoarsely. 'I fear so. I've been there three times this morning and can make nobody hear. Oh, Mr Kennedy! you do not know the awful secret—the terrible!'

But she stopped herself, as though she feared to tell me all the truth.

'Is it that you fear for your father's sake?' I inquired, a new light suddenly dawning upon me.

'Yes,' she cried, her white trembling hand upon my arm; 'I do fear. Will you go with me to Harpur Street?'

'Most willingly,' I said. 'But if you fear a tragedy, had we not better seek aid of the police?'

'The police!' she gasped, her face blanching in an instant. 'Ah, no! Let us see for ourselves first. The police must know nothing—you understand. We must not arouse suspicion. I know they have returned, because at eleven last night, after they had left for Crowland, all the blinds were down, whereas now one blind is up and the sign is in the window.'

I saw that she was nervous and agitated, and that her suspicions were based upon some secret knowledge. She believed that some hideous tragedy had occurred in that house of mystery in Harpur Street and invoked my aid in its elucidation.

'You will not blame me,' she said in a hard voice. 'I am culpable, I know; but when you have heard everything and are aware of the extraordinary circumstances which have brought me to what I am,

future; death, the pessimist would say, "a consummation devoutly to be wished." But a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living. Night fled before the day of thought, and love and joy and hope came up in a passion of obedience to knowledge. Can any one who has escaped such captivity, who has felt the thrill and glory of freedom, be a pessimist?"

The story of how the little blind deaf-mute was taught and her mind developed until she could hold her own, as she undoubtedly can at the present time, with the most brilliant students of Girton and Newnham is a marvellous story, and not the least remarkable fact about it is that it has been told in a book written by Helen Keller herself.

When she was nearly seven years old, a teacher from the well-known Perkins Institution at Boston, Miss Sullivan, was engaged to commence her education, and if the blind girl is to be admired and congratulated for her determination and perseverance, certainly Miss Sullivan is worthy of equal praise for the patience and ingenuity which she has shown. The senses of smell and taste were well developed in the child, and of course proved useful; but it was by touch that the great world of thought was opened out to her. Miss Sullivan began by spelling with her fingers into the palm of Helen Keller the word 'water,' while that liquid was poured over the child's other hand. 'That living word,' says the blind girl, 'awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy—set it free!' Other words were associated with objects; and with infinite patience Miss Sullivan went from material objects to abstract ideas, and from promiscuous instruction to systematic study. Natural history and botany were taught in the open fields of the Sunny South, and geography became a delightful pastime for the eager young girl. 'I built dams of pebbles,' she writes, 'made islands and lakes, and dug river-beds, all for fun, and never dreamed that I was learning a lesson.'

She was taught to read books in Braille type, and her progress was astonishingly rapid. In infancy, before her illness, she had indulged in baby prattle; but after the blindness and deafness came, the child was dumb save for inarticulate sounds. At ten years of age, however, she learned that a Norwegian girl, both blind and deaf, had been taught to speak, and at once Helen Keller was all eagerness to achieve a similar success. The difficult task of instructing her was undertaken by Miss Sarah Fuller, and how thoroughly well she and her pupil succeeded in what to the uninitiated must have seemed an impossibility may be gathered from the fact that Helen Keller can now talk fluently not only in English but also in German and French, and she has publicly addressed a legislative committee in the United States on behalf of the founding of trade-schools for the adult blind. As is generally known, the seeing deaf-mutes are taught to speak by watching the

mouths of their teachers as they talk, and feeling the various muscles of the throat and face as various sounds are articulated. Helen Keller had only her touch to guide her; but in the first lesson of one hour she had learned to pronounce fairly distinctly the letters M, P, A, S, T, I. Progress was now as rapid as in the acquirement of the touch-alphabet, and after eleven lessons the girl could speak the sentence, 'It is warm.' Miss Sullivan took up the work of continuing this branch of teaching, and then for two years Miss Keller attended the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York, where her training in lip-reading was perfected.

The girl's thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and particularly was she interested in literature. She soon knew whole passages of Tennyson and other poets, and these she could repeat vocally with real emphasis and feeling, so that often her listeners were moved to tears. After receiving a thoroughly sound groundwork of education in all subjects, Helen Keller, accompanied of course by Miss Sullivan, proceeded to the Cambridge School for Young Ladies, preparatory to entering Radcliffe College, where she determined to work for a degree. At both the school and the college Miss Sullivan sat by her pupil's side, repeating upon the girl's fingers the lessons that were given, and never once was any difficulty experienced. Of all the pupils, Miss Keller was the quickest to grasp a point, and at the examinations she passed with the highest success in Greek, Latin, French, English literature and history, mathematics, and art, receiving honours in German and English. The examinations lasted nine hours, and the blind girl received no advantages or favouritism. She had the questions read to her, and then gave her answers upon the typewriter in the specified time allowed to other pupils. Her method of studying art, in which she came to take a keen interest, was to visit the galleries, and, perched upon steps, to pass her fingers lightly over the statuary. In 1893 she was taken to the World's Fair at Chicago, and there the various treasures—jewels, bronzes, Oriental work, &c.—were placed in her fingers so that she might understand their form and nature. Even in instrumental music Helen Keller has come to take a delight, for, although she is quite deaf, so sensitive are her nerves that she appreciates the relative value of the sounds by the vibration, and has been able to understand the various styles of the leading composers.

Many prominent men have been interested in the young girl's case, and she has numbered among her friends and acquaintances Oliver Wendell Holmes, Phillips Brooks, Whittier, Dr Everett Hale, Mark Twain, Sir Henry Irving, and William Dean Howells. At the present time she is completing her studies; but already she has a profound knowledge of men and things, of modern and classical learning; and a new book which she has written on *Optimism*, setting forth her philosophy of life, is

even a greater proof than her autobiography of the power of her intellect and her determined energy.

Helen Keller's case is indeed a triumph of human nature, and a proof that there are no disadvantages of matter which cannot be overcome by mind. In no study, save music and the drama, is she one whit behind people who can see, and even of those things she has a very thorough grasp and appreciation. Of course, she has had the advantage of personal and individual tuition, necessitating infinite patience; but even with these it might have seemed an utter impossibility ever to break through the prison walls from within or without, as Dr Watson, himself an authority on the subject, declared less than a century ago.

Without seeking to minimise in the slightest degree the credit for skill and patience and ingenuity due to Helen Keller's instructors, we must recognise that they owe a vast deal to Dr Howe, a former manager of the Institution for the Blind at Boston. It was Dr Howe who first showed the possibilities that lay before a blind deaf-mute, and his training of Laura Bridgman was perhaps a greater triumph than even Helen Keller's case, seeing that not only was there no earlier case of success for incentive and encouragement, but all precedent and opinion was dead against him. Before we give some account of how Dr Howe enabled this afflicted girl to communicate with the outside world, it will be interesting to refer to two earlier cases of blind deaf-mutes. The first known instance, though undoubtedly there must have been others unrecorded, is that of Hannah Lamb, who lived at Burleigh Street in the Strand, London. Her story, told in a few lines in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1808, is terribly tragic. No attempt whatever seems to have been made to enable her to communicate with others; and when nine years of age she appears to have left her bed one night to sit by the fireside while her mother was out of the room, and a red-hot cinder, falling from the grate, set fire to her clothes. She was terribly burned, and four hours later died from her injuries. The next case we find is that of James Mitchell, the son of the Rev. James Mitchell, of Ardelach, Inverness. He came before the notice of Sir Astley Cooper, the distinguished surgeon, in 1808, when his father brought him to London to see if his eyes could be operated upon. The lad was then thirteen years of age, and although to all intents and purposes blind, he was able to distinguish a strong light. This was ascertained from the fact that he used to retire to an outhouse or room, and closing the doors and shutters, would place his eye at any small opening to get the full benefit of the sun's rays. Sir Astley Cooper pierced the tympanum of each ear, but without result, and two years later the right eye was operated upon, with indications that further use of the needle might have resulted in the eyes being rendered comparatively useful. But unfortunately the boy's father died at this period, and the lad returned

to Scotland without undergoing any further operation.

Mitchell's sense of smell was very acute, and if a stranger entered, however quietly, the room where he was sitting, James could detect the visitor's presence, and locate him quickly by the scent. He would then examine the stranger, and get an impression from the sense of touch. The boy appears to have obtained considerable pleasure from the vibration caused by striking his teeth with metal, and he would often sit for hours with a bunch of keys, testing each key in succession, and evidently delighting in the varied vibrations. No serious attempt to communicate with him or to enable him to communicate with others seems to have been made, although his mother and sister developed a very rude and elementary method of indicating to him by touch and action what they wished him to know. Thus, to signify approbation the boy's head or back was patted gently, and if this were withheld he seems to have known that his friends were displeased. Once when his mother went away from home for a time, his sister was able to tell him how long the parent would be absent by placing his head upon a pillow once for each night she would be away. There being no method of communicating freely with him, it was of course impossible ever to teach him religious truths; but he accompanied the family to church, and was habitually present at family prayers and behaved reverently, kneeling when the others knelt. Shortly after his father's death a minister happened to be staying in the house, and on Sunday evening James pointed to his father's Bible, and signified by his action that the family should kneel. Exactly how much may be inferred from this it is impossible to say; but there seems no reason to suppose that James had any notion of the existence of beings superior to himself.

The case of Laura Bridgman is remarkable in more ways than one; for not only was she the first blind deaf-mute to have a means of communication with the outer world opened to her, but she was a most unpromising subject with which to commence such an experiment. Laura Bridgman was a weakly infant from the first; but just before she was two years of age she had a serious illness that prostrated her, and resulted in the complete destruction of the organs of sight and hearing. When at last, after two years of illness and convalescence, she was so far restored as to be able to sit up all day, it was discovered with dismay that not only sight and hearing were gone for ever, but that her sense of smell was also destroyed and her taste much blunted. The poor child was thus left with only one sense—that of touch—possibly a unique case in the history of humanity. He must have been a bold man who saw possibilities in a creature so handicapped. 'What a situation was hers!' wrote Dr Howe. 'The darkness and silence of the tomb were around her; no mother's smile called forth her answering smile; no father's voice taught her to imitate his sounds. Brothers and sisters were

but forms of matter which resisted her touch, but which differed not from the furniture, save in warmth and in the power of locomotion, and not even in these respects from the dog and the cat.' Charles Dickens, who in his *American Notes* has made her early history familiar, has graphically described her as 'built up, as it were, in a marble cell, impervious to any ray of light or particle of sound; with her poor white hand peeping through a chink in the wall beckoning to some good man for help, that an immortal soul might be awakened.' Those who are desirous of learning how her education was commenced can read the story in *American Notes*. Instead of continuing and developing the language of signs which Laura had commenced for herself, Dr Howe determined to attempt to impart to her a knowledge of the alphabetic language in general use. Common objects such as knives, forks, keys, &c. were taken, and upon them were pasted labels with their names in raised letters. Then the labels were detached, and after a time the blind girl was able to select the right label and place it upon its corresponding object. Next the individual letters of each word were separated, and Laura learnt to build up the names of things placed in her hands. 'Now the truth began to flash upon her,' says Dr Howe, 'her intellect began to work; she perceived that there was a way by which she could herself make up a sign of anything that was in her own mind. It was no longer a dog or a parrot; it was an immortal spirit seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits. I could almost fix upon the moment when this truth dawned upon her mind and spread its light to her countenance. I saw that the great obstacle was overcome, and that henceforward nothing but patient and persevering, but plain and straightforward, efforts were to be used.' After a year of training she was able to converse fluently with the other blind children of the institution, they seeing her hands and she feeling theirs as the letters and words rapidly succeeded one another. Before long she was seen to soliloquise in the finger-language, and when her sleep was disturbed by dreams she would express her thoughts in the same way, just as the ordinary person murmurs or mutters indistinctly in broken sleep. The sense of touch was so exquisite that she could tell of the approach of people in the corridors merely by stretching her fingers out before her; and if she once passed her hand over any individual she was always able to recognise the person in a moment, even after a long interval. Laura Bridgman soon developed a keen sense of humour. Thus, when her teacher told her that the blacksmith made nails, she laughingly held up her hands and asked if he made the finger-nails.

One or two anecdotes will show the difficulty of imparting ideas to a person so afflicted. They are taken from the diary of a lady under whose tuition Laura was placed by Dr Howe:

'At eleven, gave her for a writing-lesson the story I read to her on Friday noon. She said at

first she could not remember it, because it was long ago that I read it; but she did very well. After writing it she said, "Is this truth?" Told her I thought it was not. "Is it a lie?" Tried to make her understand that it was not wrong to write it; but I doubt if I succeeded entirely. When writing she spelled the word "bureau" wrong, and then I asked why; she said, "I was very *unremembered*." She knows the word "forgetful," but wished to try to make one, and after she had done so she turned to me for approbation.

'When I went to Laura after the recess she said, "I was very much frightened." "Why?" "I thought I felt some one make a great noise, and I trembled, and my heart beat very quick." She asked me if I knew any crazy persons, then altered it to *crazy*, then to *crazy*. I asked her who gave her the new word *crazy*. She said, "Lurena told me about crazy persons, and said she was once *crazy*. What is *crazy*?" I told her that crazy persons could not think what they were doing, and attempted to change the subject; but she immediately returned to it, and repeated the question, "Have you seen crazy people?" I told her that I saw a crazy woman walking about, and she said, "Why did she walk? How could she think to walk?" [The imperfection of the teacher's definition had evidently occurred to the girl.] I told her they were sometimes sick, and became *crazy*; she said, "Who will take care of me if I am *crazy*?" I laughed at her, and told her she would not be *crazy*. She replied, "I said *if*." This conversation was interesting as proving, what had been disputed, that she had a correct conception of the idea which the word *if* suggested.

One day Laura was left in the library while her teacher went to church, and on the latter's return the girl appeared very much fatigued. Inquiry revealed the fact that she had found a Latin book printed in raised letters, and had puzzled over it for hours. Hitherto she knew nothing of foreign languages, and the fact that she could not understand a single word in the book had worried her exceedingly. It was explained to her that different nations used different languages, and she was very pleased when her instructor taught her a few words of French and Latin.

Laura Bridgman never attained to the culture of Helen Keller; but she became as accomplished as the average young lady, studied geography, history, mathematics, &c., and finally was able to think deeply on religious and other subjects. Her case became known to prominent people in all parts of the world, with many of whom she corresponded, her handwriting being clear and legible. After the completion of her own education, she herself became a useful teacher of the blind and deaf and dumb.

Lack of space forbids any further instances of blind deaf-mutes being given here; but in the three cases of James Mitchell, Laura Bridgman, and Helen Keller we have the whole history of

the education of these sadly afflicted members of society. If the Abbé de l'Épée was the first to see the possibilities of a system of finger-language for blind deaf-mutes, it was Dr Howe who first showed how real those possibilities were, and laid

the foundation for that perfection of training by which Helen Keller has benefited, and which has placed her educationally and intellectually on a level with those who have the use of all their faculties.

THE FREEING OF IVANCHO.

AN INCIDENT IN THE MACEDONIAN INSURRECTION OF 1903.

By NIGEL CARLYLE GRAHAM.

THE air in the village was thick and choking with the smoke of discharged rifles. The soldiers had just entered it, and up on the hill-side intermittent cracks and puffs of white smoke from among stunted oak-trees showed where the insurgents were making their escape. Only by the daring use of hand-bombs had they broken through the surrounding cordon of Turkish troops. Two hundred ill-armed, inexperienced peasants against three thousand soldiers—it was a hopeless affair from the very start; and after a stout defence of two hours from the cover of mud-walls and wood-stacks, the leader had ordered a retreat.

The women and children had to be left behind to the tender mercies of the foe. One or two were shot down while trying to escape with the men; but most were sitting stupefied and helpless in their homes.

In one cottage a woman was nailing down a kerosene-box with feverish haste. The face of the lid was perforated with a number of irregular holes. She had just finished the work when a sudden darkness in the room caused her to look up to ascertain the reason. Wedged in the window, like a couple of Balkan quinces, were two swarthy faces breathing heavily, each surmounted by a dirty fez. With a cry of dismay the woman rose to her feet, letting fall the shell of an exploded bomb which she had been using as a hammer, and at the same instant the heads uttered a Turkish oath and disappeared. The poor woman, sick with fear, sank on a three-legged stool, sobbing in her anguish.

Before long a *usbashi* (captain) entered, accompanied by half-a-dozen soldiers.

'Here, woman,' he said, shaking her roughly, 'what were you doing with that box and that bombshell there—eh?'

But the woman only gave a moan.

'Tell me what is in that box, or, by Allah! I'll make you,' shouted the officer, infuriated at her silence.

She lifted her face from her hands. Her countenance was one typical among Bulgar women—dull, heavy, stupid, absolutely lacking in imagination.

'Nothing,' she lied frightenedly; 'nothing, *effendi*. Only kerosene.'

'Nothing! Kerosene!' cried the *usbashi* scorn-

fully. 'Mehemet, Ali, and you others there, open that box.'

In a moment the timid, cowering creature was transformed. Snatching a burning brand from the hearth, she rushed madly at the men as they attempted to carry out the orders, and dashed her weapon in the face of the foremost. A shower of sparks, a guttural exclamation of pain, and the soldiers retreated shamefacedly to the door. There was a swish through the air as the *usbashi* dealt the woman a sickening blow on the back with the flat of his sword, and she fell paralysed and half-senseless forward among the soldiers. Two of them seized her arms while the others stepped forward to break open the box.

'If you open that box,' said the captive in a low, breathless voice, 'you will all be dead men.'

They drew back hastily, and the *usbashi*, looking rather scared, left the room. At the door he called back, 'Take the woman before the *mir alai bey*; and you others, carry out the box into the open, and be careful.'

An unnecessary warning. Had they dared they would have disobeyed. But that is impossible in the Turkish army. Very gingerly, very slowly, their trembling hands bore the box outside and deposited it tenderly on the ground. The sweat was dripping from their livid faces when the job was over, and they hurried to a safe distance.

The woman was hauled roughly to the church, which had been made the headquarters of the *mir alai* (general) and his staff. The *mir alai*, a corpulent, white-bearded man with an amiable countenance, was seated in the priest's chair writing despatches, while some of his officers were idly breaking down the sacred candles or teasing out the eyes of the saints in the holy pictures with the points of their swords. On the sudden entry of two soldiers dragging forward a captive, the *mir alai* looked up, annoyed.

'What has this Bulgar woman done?' he asked.

Her guards relinquished their hold for an instant to salute the commander. But it was the *usbashi* who answered the question.

'She was discovered with an empty bombshell in her hand, kneeling beside a nailed-up wooden case. When we sought to examine it she dared us, and struck Mehemet, here, in the face. She has just declared that whoever opens the box will die.'

